



Alpine Resources

**Use, valorisation and management
from local to macro-regional scale**



Conference Proceedings

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The PTRA Alpine Valleys: Opportunities for economic and sustainable development

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Contribution

- *Governing the Lombardy Territory, Regional Territorial Plan and Territorial Plans by Area*
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In Article 20, paragraph 6 of the framework agreement on the regional planning law LR 12/2005, reference is made to the “space of action” of the regional territorial plans for the area whose purpose is to investigate, “on a more detailed scale”, the objectives already stated in the Regional Territorial Plan (PTR): “if areas of significant size are affected by works, actions or functional uses that are of regional or supra-regional importance, the Regional Territorial Plan (PTR) may, also at the request of the provinces concerned, approve a regional territorial plan by area, which regulates how these areas are governed”.

The current Regional Territorial Plan identifies in the Regional Territorial Plans by Area – the PTRA – the programming tools for developing certain territorial areas as an opportunity to promote the competitiveness of the region and to rebalance the territory. The Lombard Region Territorial Plan provides for:

- a system of objectives to sum up the needs and aspirations of the territory
- guidelines for territorial changes to promote sustainable development and maximise opportunities
- countryside regulations to protect and maximise the territorial resources

Operating Tools to implement the courses of action Regional Territorial Plans by Area (PTRA) to govern the transformations

The PTRA investigates in more detail the socio-economic and infrastructural objectives to pursue, can dictate the criteria necessary for procuring and allocating resources and provide precise and coordinated instructions for governing the territory, also with reference to the estimates of settlements, the forms of environmental compensation and recovery and the regulations for the actions in that territory. The PTRA is therefore the instrument for territorial governance to ensure implementing an effective synergy between the strategies of economic and social development and to safeguard environmental sustainability for a portion of territory, taking a proactive approach in the protection and enhancement of the environmental components and the landscape.



The PTRA territorial area “Alpine Valleys”

The study area consists of 45 municipalities in the Alpine and pre-Alpine band across Bergamo (41 municipalities) and Lecco (4 municipalities), covering an area of 908 km² and counting a total population of 47,463 inhabitants (at 01/01/2011). Most of the municipalities have fewer than 1000 inhabitants (30 of the municipalities, of which 8 have a population below 200). The area includes a Regional Park (Parco Regionale delle Orobie Bergamasche) and part of 3 Mountain Communities (Valle Brembana, Valle Seriana, Valsassina-Valvarrone-Val D’Esino and Riviera).

The framework is based on intersecting two main themes common to the municipalities involved: belonging to areas classified as being less favoured and having a significant stock of homes (in both relative and absolute terms) – for tourists – that are rarely occupied, going to extremes in certain places (particularly in Castione della Presolana and Selvino).

Another aspect characterising the context of the PTRA is the presence of broad areas of excellent landscape-environmental values (“sanctuaries of naturalness”) of continental importance as enshrined in the recognition of large portions of the territory in the Natura 2000 network of the EU. This territory is of great interest owing to its relative proximity to the regional metropolitan system with its concentration of infrastructures and accessibility from extensive networks (for instance, the airport at Orio al Serio and the Lombard airport system in general), together with the availability of identifying and recognisable features of local products (such as the excellent local cheeses). These aspects can form

a basis for developing policies (not just spatial) for territorial positioning and promotion able to exploit the potential flows of production of value.

Construction process and plan contents

The process of forming the plan developed from three key assumptions:

- The need to identify some strong “objects” and “themes” characterising the PTRA, able to inspire interest and involvement from the local communities
- The opportunities in a process of “shared construction” of the plan, in which to foster local responsibility about the general actions
- A method for narrating the plan which, by excluding any rhetorical argumentation, provides a concise and easily communicated explanation of the project

A renewed approach to co-planning led to a constructive relationship between the Region and local authorities in the period of managing the PTRA: the most interesting and challenging part of the process began with the need to find the right balance, in the Region’s planning responsibilities, between “command and control” methods and using encouragement and guidelines (accompanying, facilitating, rewarding).

The potential functions of the PTRA can include:

- Building a “territorial schedule” i.e. identify a framework of specific spatial and relational situations in the differences between local territories, divided internally by diversity and repetitions, by consolidation and changes, and try to find some rules in them
- Identifying a possible “project storyline” that provides a descriptive and prospective “story” on which to base a cohesive view of the territory and of its inhabitants, its elements of suffering and fragility, and its assets and potential.

In recent years, action by the region has been developed to maximise Lombard mountains as a resource, identifying policies aimed to combat depopulation, safeguard environmental features, enhance mountain agriculture and the typical local products, reduce the infrastructural gap with the lower valley and to develop tourism and culture aspects. How-

ever, the territorial scenario has changed radically in recent decades, as a result of:

- The major process of relocating businesses and residence, which has concentrated the population in the valley floor and in some mountain resorts, leading to a dangerous fragility in the hillsides abandoned by the population;
- The evolution that has characterised the real estate market in recent decades (extensive purchasing of holiday homes) which, in some cases, has produced consequences in urban planning that require careful monitoring because it is taking place in an extremely delicate territory with high environmental value;
- The tourism sector which, more than any other, represents the contradictions and imbalances in the mountain territory. Although tourism is certainly a significant economic resource, it largely fails to embrace the areas beyond the leading and best known centres that cover a demand for winter sports or provide holiday homes.

Specifically, the elements to think about to ensure an overall governing of the territory and which become of regional importance are:

- The identity of the territories to promote by preserving an economic fabric with a “typical”,

local vein, relating both to craftsmanship and to agriculture

- Tourism development to be planned and consolidated.

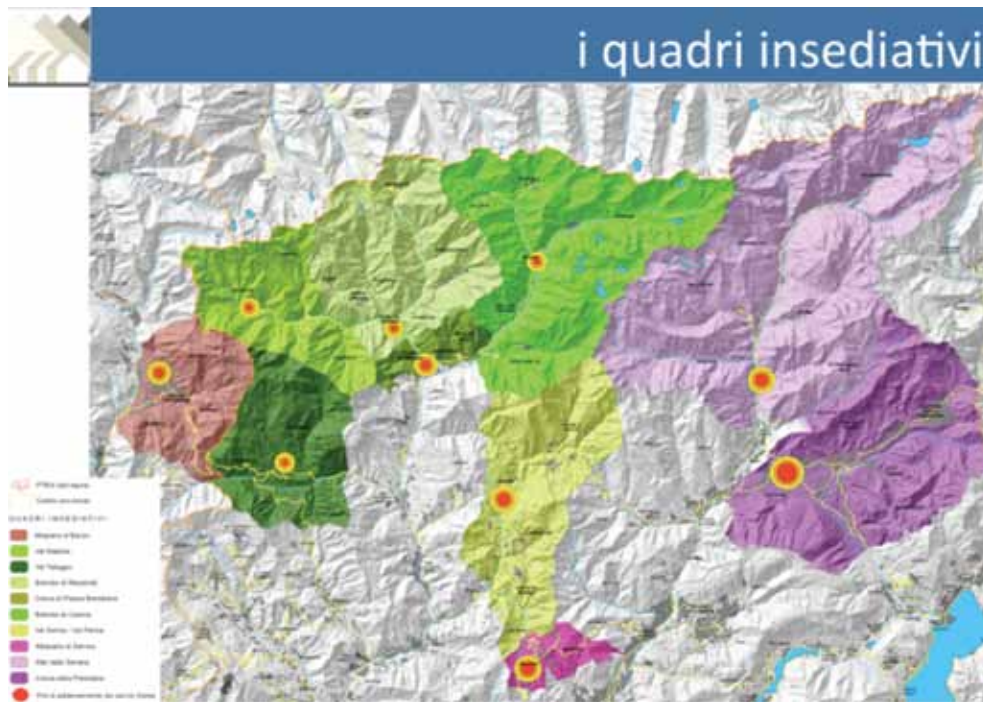
The mountains in Lombardy acquire a strategic role in the regional spatial configuration; the PTRA should focus on and interpret certain fundamental objectives for the individual and specific local situations:

- Promoting a model of endogenous development of the areas that allows makes to maximise their resources to their own advantage
- Making sure that stable and continuous growth is pursued, especially in mountain areas
- Ensuring an appropriate level of services so that both those who want to stay (e.g., the elderly) can and those who would like to move to the region (e.g., the young) are encouraged to do so.
- Identifying the complementary situations and integrations between mountain areas, valley floor areas and lowland areas (where the complementary condition also applies to the hinge function – inter-regional or international – that mountains provide).

Interpreting the hallmarks of the territorial structure and helping to define an appropriate project both in

GENERAL OBJECTIVE		
<i>Opportunities for sustainable economic development compatible with mountain territories</i>		
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3
Valorise local identity	Promote a new development model based on high quality tourism	Promote new settlement models to economise use of the land
1.1 Renovation, reuse and recovery of historical centres and existing rural buildings with a view to simplification	2.1 Defining a territorial marketing strategy to attract flows of tourists also coming from abroad	3.1 Support to the local agencies for an economic model of the real estate activities to optimise the resource of holiday homes
1.2 Enhancement of a priority regional network of trails and soft mobility	2.2 Strengthening of the existing accommodation structures to ensure sustainable and non-invasive tourism	3.2 Promoting of energy efficiency in public and private buildings
1.3 Promoting of the landscape features exemplifying an integrated ecosystem, consisting of natural and cultural aspects that represent the identity of the territory of the PTRA	2.3 Enhancing of the traditional local production supply chains	3.3 Promoting of means for a rational use of the land resource
1.4 Valorisation of the human capital and improvement of the training offer	2.4 Promoting of technologies to reduce the digital-divide	3.4 Recognition of areas of strategic importance for improving the defence of the land in order to promote widespread maintaining of the territory

Table 1. Regional territorial plans by area (PTRA) Alpine valleys.



Settlement frameworks, Province boundaries, Hubs of area services

scale of work and specificity has led to the identification of 10 “settlement frameworks” (validated in the meetings with the local stakeholders).

This structure recognises territorial specificities in a context where, despite having similar needs to reposition and redefine a model of economic and social development, there are even significant differences internally (for instance, between the strong tourist spots and the weak areas).

The strategic guidelines of the plan are based on the general objective in the direction of sustainable development (in the social, environmental and economic components) for the mountain territories, divided into specific objectives and actions as shown in Table 1.

To conclude, the key elements of the PTRA “Alpine Valleys” about to be approved, whose effectiveness as a project and for governance will be verified in the coming years, are:

- defining a territorial project that forms a reference scheme as a platform for active projects, not imposed but proposed
- the implementation of the plan’s guidelines has the nature of legitimising choices and of potential effectiveness stemming from the fact of being the outcome of a process of co-

planning (hard work and not without difficult moments, as in all true exchanges)

- the objectives and the actions are fairly simple and clear, and the implementation does not rely on conforming but on performing
- the construction of projects and the active monitoring of the plan are a necessary precondition for the effective implementation of decisions; in this context of significant thematic complexity between players, it is important to note that appropriate political and technical leadership will be essential
- the recognition from the DGRegio of the European Union for the ‘good practices’ of the PTRA “Alpine Valleys” in terms of multilevel governance is a fertile environment for an active discussion with other European contexts, also in a complementary manner with the more specific projects that can be activated, starting with the Alpine Space programme.

